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Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL 901

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ACTION EA-20

INFO OCT-01 NSA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-08 L-04
NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 UPW-01 IO-16
AID-28 RSR-01 /139 W
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R 091043Z AUG 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8423
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Ivan Zuber DATE 1/26/82
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☑ RELEASABLE☑
RELEASE DENIED☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 12663

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: REPORTED VIEW FROM THE PALACE

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT HOANG DUC NHA IN INTERVIEWS WITH FOREIGN PRESS CORRESPONDENTS IS REPORTED TO HAVE CLAIMED THAT PRESIDENT THIEU IS NOT WORRIED BY THE PROSPECT OF AN UNCONTESTED PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS VERSIONS OF AUGUST 6 WIRE SERVICE STORIES ON BACKGROUND INTERVIEW GIVEN FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS BY HOANG DUC NHA, PRESIDENT THIEU'S PRIVATE AND PRESE SECRETARY, NHA MAINTAINED GENERAL DUONG VAN MINH WILL NOT WITHDRAW FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS AND THAT THIEU WILL DEFEAT MINH WITH 55 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. NHA IS ALSO REPORTED AS STATING THAT THIEU IS NOT CONCERNED OVER THE PROPSECT OF AN UNCONTESTED RACE. NHA PREDICTED THAT VICE PRESIDENT KY WOULD BE UNABLE TO MOUNT A COUP D'ETAT AGAINST THE REGIME, ASSERTING THAT ONLY ONE AIR DIVISION (THE 5TH AT TAN SON NHUT) IS LOYAL TO KY AND THAT IN ANY EVENT INTELLIGENCE SERVICES WOULD INTERRUPT ANY PLANNED

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COUP.

3. ALSO IN AN INTERVIEW AUGUST 8 WITH OPPOSITION CONG LUAN DAILY, NHA REPORTEDLY SAID THAT SO FAR THE PRESIDENT HAS NOT DISCUSSED A POSTPONEMENT OF THE ELECTION AND ASSERTED THAT THE ELECTION WOULD BE ORGANIZED EVEN IF THIEU WERE THE ONLY CANDIDATE.

4. NHA RECENTLY HAS BEEN HAVING A SERIES OF LUNCHEONS WITH FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS, INCLUDING DOWNING (TIME) AND PARKS (BALTIMORE SUN) WHO HAVE BOTH COMMENTED TO US ON NHA'S EVIDENT PRIDE IN THE "SUCCESSFUL EXCLUSION" OF KY AND HIS PROFESSED UNCONCERN WITH THE PROSPECT OF A ONE-MAN RACE. THE CORRESPONDENTS SAY THEY INTERPRET NHA'S STATEMENTS AS EVIDENCE THAT THIEU INTENTS TO RESIST WHATEVER PRESSURE IS PUT ON HIM TO PERMIT KY TO RUN.

5. NHA'S COMMENTS MAY IN PART BE INTENDED TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR DEFENDING THE VALIDITY OF A ONE MAN RACE. THERE ARE NO SIGNS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS TRYING ACTIVELY TO ENCOURAGE MINH TO REMAIN IN THE RACE (OR TO LEAVE IT FOR THAT MATTER).
BERGER